
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

★ news release

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INTERIOR AND ARMY ADOPT NEW JOINT RESERVOIR LAND ACQUISITION POLICY; UDALL ISSUES INSTRUCTIONS ON IMPLEMENTATION

A far-reaching policy to protect lands around Federal reservoirs and accelerate their full utilization for recreational programs and fish and wildlife protection has been adopted by the Departments of the Interior and Army, Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall said today.

The action, supported by the Izaak Walton League and other conservation groups, carries the endorsement of President Kennedy.

In his 1961 Message on Natural Resources, the President said that steps should be taken "to insure that land acquired for the construction of Federally-Financed reservoirs is sufficient to permit future development for recreational purposes."

Under the previous policy, adopted in October 1953, the Department's Bureau of Reclamation and the Army's Corps of Engineers obtained land title only to a relatively narrow strip around reservoirs.

The previous policy, Secretary Udall said, has restricted public use for recreation and has limited fish and wildlife protection. It was criticized by the Public Works and Resources Subcommittee of the House Committee on Government Operations in a report in 1957.

Simultaneously with the adoption of the new land acquisition policy, Secretary Udall issued a departmental order to carry out the purposes of the new policy.

Secretary Udall directed that Department reservoir projects proposed for authorization include plans for recreation and fish and wildlife protection sufficiently specific so that upon authorization the Department will have a clear basis for requesting appropriations.

He assigned the responsibility for preparation of the recreational and fish and wildlife portions of project plans to the Department's National Park Service and Fish and Wildlife Service respectively.

Secretary Udall also said that authorization proposals on Department projects which are pending within the Executive Branch or which have not been acted upon by Congress would be reviewed so that necessary amendments to accomplish the goals of the new policy could be sought.

He also ordered that the status of reservoirs which are already in operation, those under construction, and those authorized but not yet constructed, be reviewed for conformance with the new policy. He said that legislation would be sought in cases where adequate provisions for fish and wildlife and public recreation were not provided.

Among the lands which both Departments will now seek to acquire in fee title include:

1. Lands needed to provide public access.
2. Lands needed to meet present and future requirements for fish and wildlife.
3. Lands needed to meet present and future requirements for outdoor recreation.
4. Lands below the maximum flowage line necessary to safeguard against saturation, wave action, bank erosion, and to permit induced surcharge operations.

Under Secretary Udall's order, easements--rather than fee title--can be taken only for lands which meet all of the following conditions: lands above the storage pool; lands in remote sections of the project area; lands which have no substantial value for fish and wildlife and recreation; and where it is to the financial interest of the Government to take easements rather than fee title.

The text of the joint policy and Secretary Udall's order was published in the Federal Register on February 22.

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